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Finally, the British Government do not "refuse to the United States any jurisdiction which was conceded to Russia, and which properly accrued to the present possessor of Alaska in virtue of treaties or the law of nations." The despatch concludes with an offer of arbitration if the Government of the United States still differs as to the legality of recent captures of British ships.

HEBREWS AND CHRISTIANS.

A Hebrew-Christian Conference was held in Chicago on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 24 and 25. The programme included an address by Rev. Dr. E. P. Goodwin on "The Attitude of Nations and of Christian People toward the Jews," an address by Rabbi Bernhard Felsental on "Why Israelites do not Accept Jesus as the Messiah," a discussion of "The Religious Condition of the Jews To-day and their Attitude toward Christianity," by Rabbi Hirsch, and an address by Rev. John H. Barrows on "Israel as an Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion."

Tuesday's programme included an address by Rabbi Joseph Stolz on "The Past Biblical History of the Jews;" an address entitled "Jerusalem and Palestine as they are To-day and the Restoration of Israel," by Rev. Dr. J. M. Caldwell; an address on "Israel's Messiah," by Prof. D. C. Marquis; an address entitled "The Anti-Semitism of To-day," by a Jewish layman, and a closing address on "Israelites and Christians, their Mutual Relations and Warfare; or, Lessons in this Conference," by Prof. H. M. Scott.

A friendly conference is a step towards mutual toleration. The result if legitimate and unhindered must be an increase of mutual respect. The Orthodox Jews accept the entire Old Testament as do the Orthodox Christians. Unitarians are nearer Jews in creed than Trinitarians. We would not minimize to great and essential difference between Jew and Christian, namely, "What think ye of Christ?" But this meeting marks an era and is a portent.

A FEW PEACEFUL WORDS ANENT WAR.

I should be quite unworthy the warlike nature attributed to me by my friend, the correspondent of last week's *Commonwealth*, if I remained silent under the challenge of his words. I really cannot, without a bit of good-natured protest—final protest, I protest, O frowning Jove of the editorial chair! it shall be!—let past the imputation, so very often made, by Peace Societies against those not wholly in sympathy with their methods, that one defends war only through an inherent predilection for gore and destruction.

* *

Why cannot folk understand one another? Most controversies are carried on absurdly like the duel between *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* and *Viola*,—one combatant poking vaguely in the general direction where the other stands, but carefully covering the eyes from seeing where effectively to poke. Or to vary the metaphor, each sets up and knocks over a straw effigy—usually "not at all like"—of his adversary, and then, demolishing it, felicitates himself on victory. Rational controversy must rest on clear recognition of the adversary's exact position. And there must be premises in common before one can rationally disagree in any other than schoolboy, *tu quoque*, fashion.

Let us try, for once, to find the grounds of agreement and the points of disagreement between the Peace Societies and those whom they call—though they by no means call themselves—their opponents. Let us find, if we can, exactly where we each stand; and then let us tolerantly admit each that the other has a right to stand there.

* *

My friend the *Commonwealth* correspondent seems to indicate that the point of disagreement is that the Peace Societies "love peace and therefore are sensitive to cruelty and bloodshed," while the world outside, in general, and the peccant critic of Verestchagin in particular, do not love peace, and are insensitive to cruelty and bloodshed. Now this is one of the well-meant misstatements which kill argument and mutual understanding. The love of peace, the loathing of cruelty and bloodshed are not the points of difference between the Peace Societies and—and myself, let us say, for the sake of brevity. These things are exactly our best ground of agreement. We love peace precisely as fervently as any society formed to promote it. We loathe bloodshed and cruelty as every one in touch with true civilization must loathe them. There is no disagreement here; when the Peace Societies vaunt themselves because of these things, they vaunt us also.

* *

The true point of difference is sharply here. The Peace Societies claim that no evil can be worse than wars and that therefore war must be abolished *at any cost*? We claim that, deplorable as war in itself is, it is the only corrective yet discovered for certain evils which exist; and therefore war cannot as yet be *arbitrarily* (?) abolished with safety to civilization. Here and only here we disagree. (?) On this point alone can controversy rationally be carried on. [The italics and (?) are ours and commented on elsewhere.—ED.]

It will be seen that the horrors of war, *per se*, have absolutely nothing to do with the controversy. We grant them, freely and fully. If war is unjustifiable under any circumstances, then they are criminal. If war is justifiable, they are stern necessities, of which the less said the better, in the interest of manliness.

* *

To deny that evil exists which war alone, as civilization stands to-day, can remedy, is to take the Christian Science view of political matters. That is, a thing is presumably made non-existent, by the denial that it exists. But Christian scientists have been known, despite their assertion that disease and disabilities are figments of fancy, to visit the optician and dentist. Our new and beloved friend Ortheris, least of the Dauntless Three, puts the soldiers' side of the case a little roughly, but very justly, when he says: "Plucky lot of fightin' the Good Fight, as they call it, folks would do, if we soldiers didn't see they had a quiet place to fight in!"

* *

To keep exactly to our point of difference—is war ever justifiable? If, in the civilized and rational countries where the Peace Societies hold their meetings and urge their doctrines, they should succeed to-day in having it clearly known that the "strong arm" was finally paralyzed, does any one seriously suppose civilization would

outlast a generation? If the Peace Societies suppose so, the world at large does not; and on such an uncompromising difference of opinion, why argue? Only let it be clearly understood that just here, and not elsewhere, comes in the difference of opinion.

* *

I need not, in arguing the matter from my side, go so far backward as to ask if that war was justifiable which preserved to us the Union and abolished slavery; or if the righteous course would have been for the North to acquiesce when the South fired upon Sumter. We need not journey so far from home as to ask whether that constant and very terrible border warfare is justifiable, at whose price alone there is such a thing as British India. Is it in the interest of humanity and civilization that the English should withdraw from India, and suttees, crucifixion, child-marriage with all its unspeakable attendant horrors again flood the land unchecked by English authority and reform? Are such horrors (inevitable as the world now stands, should war be abolished), better or worse than war?

We need only face our own frontier. Those on the spot and in authority say that the religious craze among certain tribes of Indians, fermented by the unknown rascal who calls himself their Messiah and promises that under his leadership they shall sweep the whites from the earth is exceedingly likely to end, and that speedily, in a general Indian uprising. What do the Peace Societies counsel in this immediate, practical exigency? The razing of our frontier forts and the withdrawal of our troops? Would the scenes which would follow, with the maddened savages wreaking their will, in the border settlements, on our women and our little children, be more righteous, more civilized, more Christian scenes than those of a battle-field? Is there any other remedy than war for these conditions? Here and now, I mean; not theoretically, in that millennial future when we shall have educated and christianized the Indians past all fear of outbreak.

* *

Do such instances prove, or not, that war is not yet outgrown, but exists, an occasional bitter and deplorable necessity?

Let us all be Peace Societies to the extent of crying condemnation on useless war, waged for trivial or selfish cause. Let us all be men enough to rejoice, with Taine, that when war is at the door, warlike virtues are behind the door.

There is a very curious thing—Dickens observed it, and instanced it very graphically in some of the Honey-thunder-Crisparkle scenes in *Edwin Drood*—about such discussions. And that is the uncommonly and uncompromisingly warlike tone almost invariably adopted by the advocates of peace.

DOROTHY LUNDT.

November 22, 1890.

—*The (Boston) Commonwealth.*

I was not very old before I made two very useful discoveries: First, that all mankind were not solely employed in observing me (a belief that all young people have); and next, that shamming was of no use; that the world was very clear-sighted and soon estimated a man at his just value. This cured me, and I determined to be natural and let the world find me out.—*Sydney Smith.*

IS WAR A "SURGEON'S KNIFE" OR AN ASSASSIN'S DAGGER?

"War is the surgeon's knife." As if any humane surgeon would not reduce human suffering by etherization; as if any conscientious surgeon would ever cut except to save and not to destroy—the latter being the confessed object of nine-tenths of the wars; as if the necessity of nature, which disease precipitates were to be compared with wars which originate in the wicked human will!

To defend war is to train and educate men to engage in it. To bedizen it with flimsy and flaunting glory; to disguise its horrid cruelties with romance, song, and painting, so as to hide their hideousness, is to be untrue to fact. It is to exalt tradition and fancy, passion and force, over the sweetness of love, the light of nature and of reason.

Thank you, Verestchagin! Thank you, Tolstoi! Thank you, Erckmann—Chatrian! You have helped the impression made by the Sermon on the Mount. You have helped me to hate war!—*The Commonwealth.*

Our attention was directed to a lively discussion in the paper of which the above extract formed a part. Another correspondent of the same journal says in reply:

"Let us try, for once, to find the grounds of agreement and the points of disagreement between the Peace Societies and those whom they call—though they by no means call themselves—their opponents. Let us find, if we can, exactly where we each stand; and then let us tolerantly admit each that the other has a right to stand there."

Surely a worthy attempt. But, alas, it is followed by the usual sad failure! The writer, however, claims to love peace even as much as Peace Societies do. This is the point of "agreement." Then he (or she?) proceeds to say:

"The true point of difference is sharply here. The Peace Societies claim that no evil can be worse than wars and that therefore war must be abolished at any cost. We claim that, deplorable as war in itself is, it is the only corrective yet discovered for certain evils which exist; and therefore war cannot as yet be arbitrarily abolished with safety to civilization. Here and only here we disagree."

"The Peace Societies claim that no evil can be worse than wars." We have not made nor have we happened to see that "claim," but we confess that if slavery was indeed the "sum of all villainies," the war-system is hardly less than that. What command of the decalogue does it not break? What benediction of the blessed does it deserve? What humane instinct does it not wound? What low passion does it not everstimulate? What lust does it not seek to gratify? Of course no finite reason can weigh many things that are wrong and give the exact balance of "worse" or better. But if any national institution, custom or practice includes more things which an enlightened conscience condemns than the system of war we have failed to find it.

To resume the surgical figure: War is an alleged remedy for certain diseases in the body politic. In many cases the remedy is worse than the disease. It is like inoculation with small-pox to hinder measles! There is no perceivable relation between the remedy and the disease. The trouble is some injustice—the fruit of selfish greed or pride or love of power. The cure commended is not the exercise of reason, not a decision of conscience, not an appeal to law, but to "the stern 'arbitrament' (?) of